

EFCDP SERMON NOTES • April 21, 2024

Series: *Love Letters # 2*

“Being a Friend of God” • John 15:12-17

The Big Idea: *Those who love like Jesus are friends of Jesus.*

1. We must embrace Jesus’ definition of love.

Vv. 12-13

2. We must obey Jesus’ command to love sacrificially.

Vv. 14-15

3. We must bear the fruit of Jesus’ love in our lives.

Vv. 16-17

Digging Deeper

A guide for personal and small group study for the week of April 21, 2023.



→ Was any part of the message unclear? Which aspect of the message do you think will be the most challenging to apply to your own life?

→ Do you agree with the “big idea” of this passage? Why or why not?

1. Do you know someone who is famous? If so, who? What is the nature of your relationship?

→ Do you have a friend who likes to “name-drop?” If so, what are some things they say? What do you think their motivation is for saying those things?

2. What do your non-churched (unsaved) friends typically think Christians are like?

- Do you find that Christians are often known more for the things they are against rather than being sacrificially loving of others? Why or why not?

3. Jesus calls us to love “...as I have loved you.” What, in very practical terms, does this mean? (In other words, in what ways has Jesus loved us that we can emulate? In what other ways has Jesus loved us that only He can?)

4. Read John 15:7-11. What parallels do you see between this passage and John 15:12-17?

→ How does John 15:11 reveal the results of obeying Jesus’ commands?

→ Why does this matter?

5. How could you refer to John 15:11 (and then vv. 12-17) in helping a believer who tells you they don't have any real joy in their life anymore?

6. What are some ways that a Christian could potentially lay down their life for another Christian?

7. Have you experienced a fellow believer taking Jesus' command in John 15:12 seriously in how they related to you? If so, briefly describe. What impact did this love have on you? On the relationship with that person?

8. Is Jesus' definition of love different than what most people might say love is? If so, in what way(s)? Why does this matter?

9. Read John 13:12-17. How does this help us understand Jesus' definition of real love? What are ways a Christian today could follow Jesus' example?

10. Is Jesus' teaching in John 15:12-17 is an explanation of the metaphor Jesus used in John 15:1-11? If so, how does it help us understand the meaning of the grape vine illustration?

11. In John 15:14-15, Jesus called His disciples "friends." What did Jesus mean by that? What shift in relationship is implied in John 15:15?

12. Read John 8:21-30. What do we learn about Jesus' relationship with the Father? Do you see any parallels between this and what Jesus teaches in John 15:12-17? How does this impact what it

means to “abide” in Him? What kind of “fruit” did Jesus’ ministry bear in John 8:30?

13. Read James 2:14-26. What parallels (if any) do you see between this passage and John 15:12-17?

14. Read Galatians 5:18-24. Everyone’s life produces fruit. What “fruit” (good or bad) do you think has been most evident in your Christian life over the past six months? What changes in the fruit of your life would you like to see occur?

15. Read the following passages, noting the various results of a person’s life:

- Philippians 3:12-14
- Hebrews 13:15-16

16. Read Job 15:1-6, 16:1-5, 22:1-11, and 42:7-11. What do you think of Job’s “friends?” How does God view them? What did Job need to do before God restored him?

→ What does this teach us about forgiveness?

17. What is the connection between obedience and answered prayer?

18. What do these passages teach about election? Romans 8:29-30, Ephesians 1:4-5 and 11, 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and 2 Timothy 1:9.

19. What is the connection Jesus makes between bearing fruit and answered prayer? Why does this matter?

20. What change(s) would you like to see God do in your heart in the next two weeks to make you a better friend to Him?